DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 361 752 CS 508 249

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TITLE "Scholarship Reconsidered": A Challenge To Use Teaching Portfolios To Document the Scholarship of Teaching.
PUB DATE 29 Apr 93
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Communication Association (New Haven, CT, April 28, May 2, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Faculty Evaluation; Higher Education; *Portfolios (Background Materials); *Scholarship; Speech Communication; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Supervision; Teaching (Occupation)
IDENTIFIERS Teacher Portfolios

ABSTRACT

Linking teaching portfolios to the scholarship of teaching can help the teaching profession in general (and communication departments in particular) and can help expand the ways to document what teachers do to help students learn. E. Boyer's report "Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate" provides a structure and vocabulary for promoting these activities within the scholarship rubric. The report argues for four separate, yet overlapping functions of "scholarship": scholarship of discovery; scholarship of integration; scholarship of application; and scholarship of teaching. The challenge becomes how to go beyond the usual rankings of research publications to measure scholarship. The teaching portfolio movement has the similar impact of Boyer's work in expanding the horizons of those interested in the evaluation of teaching. Teaching portfolios document teaching efforts by taking advantage of: teachers' reflective thinking on their own teaching; sharing what teachers do with a mentor or colleague to create dialogues on teaching; and the creation of dialogue on campus about teaching as a way to end the privatization of teaching. Portfolios most often include three types of materials: examples of graded essays, a reflective statement describing the teacher's personal philosophy of teaching, and observation reports. Among items that might be in portfolios of communication professors are: forensic speeches in communication analysis; videos done in forensic competitions; setting up or running a successful internship; and a media interview on a successful teaching innovation. (RS)

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ED 361 752

# SCHOLARSHIP RECONSIDERED: A CHALLENGE TO USE TEACHING PORTFOLIOS TO DOCUMENT THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

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PROGRAM: The Changing Role of the American Professoriate

Sponsored by: ACA

Eastern Communication Association

April 29, 1993

New Haven, Connecticut

CS508249

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Perhaps no one more than Ernest L. Boyer has influenced decisions on the retention, promotion, and tenure of professors in this generation. Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, raised the essential issues for broadening the consideration of scholarship. Russell Edgerton, the President of the American Association of Higher Education, viewed the report as "...reclaiming the common ground of scholarship that underlies" teaching, service, and research. The former President of Stanford University, Donald Kennedy, saw the report as dispelling the polarity between teaching and scholarship as a way to achieve "a more rigorous and healthy version of the academy--and importantly, for a renewal and revitalization of teaching as well." Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University believed that Scholarship Revisited spoke directly to the renewed debate "...over the faculty's preoccupation with research and its effects on the quality of teaching." (The Edgerton, Kennedy and Bok quotations are from promotional literature of the Carnegie Foundation)

In another vein, Peter Seldin's Successful Use of Teaching Portfolios, awakens the professoriate to ways to enhance the conversation among peers as to teaching. Seldin observed how Boyer's work created the new emphasis on teaching by national emphasis on "...the insistent viewpoint that teaching is actually an expression of scholarship, that scholarship doe not confine itself to the cutting edge of research, but also lives in intimate knowledge and teaching of the research in the classroom."

From these two contributions communication departments gain immensely by having rationales and a vocabulary to present to our colleagues in other disciplines and sciences about the work we do. Our Greek heritage created rhetoric as a useful art that enhanced the quality of public life--the study of rhetoric was essential to a democratic society. While the necessity of communication studies in the academy is obvious to most of us, we are also familiar with the difficulty that some colleagues have had with other faculty about the seriousness of scholarship for those faculty engaged in debate/forensics, directing productions on the stage or the studio, producing videos, researching communication in organizational settings, studying communication in the classroom, etc. Boyer's schemata provides us with a structure and vocabulary for promoting these activities within the scholarship rubric. Within the scholarship of teaching, the portfolio method also allows us to expand the structure and vocabulary for the evaluation and improvement of teaching.

**The Context: <u>Scholarship Reconsidered</u>'s Contributions**

Boyer argues simply that we need to change the definite of the work of faculty "in ways that reflect more realistically the full range of academic and civic mandates (p.16)." In essence the book argues to change the traditional reliance on research and publication as the only measures of a faculty. Harvard's President Bok observed, "Collectively, however, faculties often seem distressingly sluggish and unwilling to change (1986, p. 184)."

After documenting the dissatisfaction among college faculties about the present system, Boyer provides a rhetorical answer in keeping the word "scholarship" in four phrases to describe faculty activity. To do this the book argues for four separate, yet overlapping functions.

Closest to what academics speak of as traditional research is the concept **"scholarship of discovery,"** which is the discovery of new knowledge by "disciplined, investigative efforts within the academy (p.17)." The outcomes, the process, and the passion of original research define this category.

Also valuable is the **"scholarship of integration"** by which Boyer means "...making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialist too (p.18)." These ideas come from "disciplined work the seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research." Kenneth Anderson"s classic article on ethos is this type of work. Boyer notes,

> The distinction we are drawing here between "discovery" and "integration" can be best understood, perhaps, by the questions posed. Those engaged in discovery ask, "What is to be known, what is yet to be found?" Those engaged in integration ask, "What do the findings mean? Is it possible to interpret what's ben discovered in ways that provide a larger, more comprehensive understanding?" (p. 19)

The writer is looking for patterns that connect and as such often

is working at interdisciplinary boundaries. The connection between knowledge and audience is not only a communicative concern but one based on the desire to help others understand what people have added to the field of the known. Societal problems demand integration of knowledge often. The former president of the University of Hawaii, Harlan Cleveland noted,

> The academy's students, and its outside critics too, notice that the vertical academic disciplines, build around clusters of related methodologies, are not in themselves very helpful in solving problems. No real-world problem can be fitted into the jurisdiction of a single academic department (1972, p. 13)

The third area, **"the scholarship of application,"** explores those areas in which the scholar asks, "How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be helpful to individuals as well as institutions? (p.22)." Here a distinction must be drawn between those activities of citizenship within the civic and academic communities and those activities that relate to "one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity (p.22)." Work in this area often responds to those areas where social problems of society define the needs and vagaries of action. A work like Mark Hickson and Don Stacks, Effective Communication for Academic Chairs meets this standard as knowledge of the communication discipline is applied in each of those article to the needs of academic chairs. It is a service for all chairs in providing approaches to

overcoming the challenges of being a department chair.

The last area is the important area of the **"scholarship of teaching,"** which deals with those areas in which the transmitting, transformation, and extension of knowledge occurs. This area moves between the vitality of changing the classroom to promote better learning to the development of pedagogical writings. "Great teachers create a common ground of intellectual commitment...and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers (p. 24)." The base of such activity comes from knowing as "Those who teach must, above all be well informed, and steeped in the knowledge of their fields. Teaching can be well regarded only as professors are widely read and intellectually engaged (p.23)." The thoughtful educator Parker Palmer (1993) in his American Association of Higher Education keynote address remarked about the distinctiveness of teaching as part of a unique community of higher education--one that does not reflect the therapeutic, civic, or business communities. For him this scholarship of teaching is inherent in the research we do, not in a dichotomy of doing one or the other, but in the way that our research informs and develops our teaching.

Essential to Boyer's view is that these four forms of scholarship form an interdependent whole in ways that allow us to expand the narrowness of "publish or perish" with its corollary that true scholarship is research. It prevents the narrowness of claiming that textbooks or article in the Journal of Applied Communication are now suitable for consideration of tenure and promotion (Boyer, p. 35). This expanded view of contributions by

scholarship, still leave us with the valuative question about what is excellence?, what is a national reputation?, and/or what has advanced the field? In these questions one discovers the contributions of thoughtful scholarship.

It is not that these contributions should not be evaluated rigorously, but that scholarship of any type "...can reveal a professor's knowledge of the field, illuminate essential integrative themes, and powerfully contribute to excellence in teaching (p.35)." The challenge becomes how to take these concerns to go beyond the usual ranking of research publications to measure scholarship. In the 1989 Carnegie Foundation national survey of faculty some 68 percent agreed to the statement that "at my institution we need better ways, besides publications, to evaluate the scholarly performance of the faculty (Boyer, p.34)." (Note that the community colleges had the lowest rate of agreement at 55 percent while the comprehensive university had the highest at 80 percent.)

Given this major problem facing faculty, of how do we evaluate these other forms of teaching--the realistic question created by **Scholarship Reconsidered**--one must consider the efforts of the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) to move teaching evaluation beyond the usual student opinion ratings as some type of systematic, just system for the area of the scholarship of teaching. The teaching portfolio movement has the similar impact as Boyer's work in expanding the horizons of those interested in the evaluation of teaching.

**Teaching Portfolios Promote the Scholarship of Teaching**

At most institutions lip service is paid to teaching by the use of student evaluations. At my own institution six university level questions are used for all faculty, while the department and individual can add their own for individual purposes. The last provost urged that departments add their own observation systems and an analysis of syllabi. Last year the provost's office on the recommendation of the University Life Committee held a convocation to consider the use of portfolios as a way to improve teaching and to give faculty the option of using them as part of the record for establishing judgments about effective teaching.

**Definition:** **The Portfolio Movement serves as a way to document teaching efforts by taking advantage of a) reflective thinking on one's teaching; sharing of what one does with a mentor or colleague as a way to create a dialogue on teaching, and c) the creation of dialogue on campus about teaching as a way to end the privatization of teaching.** Portfolios are generally a 3 ring binder that creates a teaching record include most often 3 types of materials:

A: Products of Good Teaching (examples of graded essays along with your comments, students publications or other student work, statements by alumni on the quality of work);

B: Material from Oneself (a reflective statement describing one's personal teaching philosophy, strategies, and objectives, statement of teaching responsibilities, representative syllabi, description of curricular revisions, steps taken to improve teaching, creative assignments &

tests); and

C: Materials from Others (observation reports on one's teaching, student course and teaching evaluation data, teaching award information, invitations to present ideas on teaching at conferences, statement form colleagues who have reviewed the teaching materials of the course).

**Functions:** **Portfolios increase the dialogue on teaching by helping to create "conversations" with**

a) a mentor and/or colleague. Often a mentor from another discipline will be forced to ask "WHY?" more often not knowing the links within the discipline, while the colleague from the discipline helps with content.

b) an evaluation committee. The portfolio switches the measurement of teaching from data points to a wide range of teaching activities and measurements. A better gestalt of teaching is created.

c) evidence of teaching for job searches. The portfolio serves as evidence of teaching that committees can examine during hiring processes. Universities should be asking for evidence of teaching effectiveness--the portfolio is becoming a nationally acceptable way of documenting teaching activity.

While this paper is more concerned with the first two functions of increasing dialogue about teaching as a way to legitimize teaching conversations and evaluation, the third function flows from the others and is one that administrators should consider as part of the evaluation of candidates. Portfolios definitely are a way to provide evidence of teaching effectiveness by the candidates.

The major contribution most advocates of portfolios mention is the perceived improvement of teaching. Portfolios increase

reflection and action about teaching by:

a) giving focus on teaching as part of a professor's expected activities;

b) encouraging faculty to seek ways to improve their teaching by attending conference meetings on teaching, reading about teaching techniques, and creating discussions about teaching within the department and university; and

c) stimulating formal and informal research on teaching.

As someone having to evaluate faculty constantly on teaching, the idea of expanding items to include for the scholarship of teaching is enticing. Among the 49 items listed by Edgerton, et. al. (p. 8) that relate specifically to our discipline are:

1. "Publications by students on course-related work"--could be papers at student panels at conventions; papers at several of the national honors conferences for students; forensic speeches in communication analysis; videos done in competitions.

2. "Setting up or running a successful internship"--a common feature of most of our departments, but definitely a way to look at a different type of teaching activity.

meetings intended to improve teaching"--the many basic course workshops, short courses at SCA and the regional, summer conferences,e.g., the small college series at Hope College, the C-SPAN workshops, etc. are ways to enhance this standard.

4. "A media interview on a successful teaching innovation"--many of the activities in our classes would qualify as the normal procedures for group work and class debates often draws upon the expertise of our field; the SCA and ECA series on "Teachers on Teaching" provides evidence of national recognition of teaching skill.

The other 45 items have a generic quality to them. No matter what it is in this expanded vision of what EVIDENCE one can provide to acknowledge teaching activity. A lot of detail can be added, but my purpose this afternoon is to link portfolios to the consideration of the scholarship of teaching. Both ideas not only help the profession in general, but also help our discipline expand the ways to document what we do to help students learn.

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